



What is claimed is:

1. A control system for an appliance which processes household items, said appliance having an electronic control unit comprising

selection means, for the selection of predetermined first functions of said appliance,

means for storing first information for controlling execution of said first functions in response to selections made through said selection means,

means for storing second information for controlling the execution of second functions different from said first functions, and

AC connection means for interfacing with an external electronic device, said second information being accessible for enabling the selection of said second functions only when said external electronic device is operatively connected to said connection means.

2. A control system, according to claim 1, wherein said electronic control unit comprises memory means, said first means for storing said first information comprising a first area of said memory means, and said means for storing said second set of information comprising a second area of said memory means accessible by said external electronic device for receiving from



said external electronic device data for enabling execution of said second functions.

3. A control system, according to claim 1, wherein said interfacing means is operatively connectable to said electronic unit and said external electronic device.

4. A control system, according to claim 3, wherein said interfacing means comprises an interfacing module mounted on said electronic unit.

5. A control system, according to claim 1, wherein said electronic unit comprises a microcontroller having a communication line operatively connectable to said external device.

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6. A control system, according to claim 1, wherein said electronic unit comprises means for transmitting information relating to the operating status of the household appliance.

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7. A control system, according to claim 1, wherein said external device comprises means for receiving information relating to the operating status of the household appliance.

8. A control system, according to claim 1, wherein said external device comprises a display device.

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9. A control system, according to claim 8, wherein said external device displays on said display device status information relating to the operating status of the household appliance.

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10. Control system, according to claim 1, wherein said household appliance comprises a first clock, and said external device comprises a second clock, for updating the first clock.

11. Control system, according to claim 1, wherein said external device comprises a personal computer.

12. Control system, according to claim 11, further comprising a data bus operatively connectible to said personal computer and said household appliance.

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13. Control system, according to claim 1, wherein said external device comprises a remote control and said interfacing means comprises a signal receiver for receiving signals from said remote control.

14. Control system, according to claim 1, wherein said external device comprises means for storing a management program for executing said second functions.

15. Control system, according to claim 14, wherein said management program comprises control routines for avoiding improper programming of the household appliance.

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16. Control system, according to claim 15, wherein said management program comprises utility functions for the household appliance.

17. Method for programming an electronically controlled appliance for processing household items by performing first

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functions and second functions, comprising storing a first set of information in a first portion of a memory, and accessing said first portion of said memory to perform said first functions, storing a second set of information in a second portion of said memory, for enabling said appliance to perform said second functions, and executing said second functions only by interfacing an external electronic device with said memory.

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18. A control system, according to claim 9, wherein said status information comprises parameters identifying the progress of a program being performed by said household-appliance.

19. A control system, according to claim 9, wherein said status information comprises diagnostic messages for the technical servicing of said household appliance.

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20. Control system, according to claim 14, wherein said management program comprises a cook-book.

21. Control system, according to claim 14, whereby said management program comprises a database for food preserved within a refrigerating appliance.

22. A method, according to claim 17, wherein said second functions comprise checking the operation of devices internal to said appliance.

23. A method, according to claim 17, wherein said second functions comprise changing the configuration of heating elements of a cooking appliance, during a cooking process.

sub C4> 24. A method, according to claim 17, wherein said second functions comprise advising when a given food stored in a refrigerating appliance is approaching its expiry date.

25. A method, according to claim 17, wherein said second functions comprise controlling the performance of a washing cycle during scheduled time periods.

26. A method, according to claim 17, wherein said second functions comprise indicating what recipe or recipes can be prepared with a limited number of available ingredients.

27. A method, according to claim 17, wherein said external electronic device comprises means for storing cooking recipes.

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sub C5> 28. A method, according to claim 17, wherein said external electronic device comprises means for displaying baking process parameters.

29. A method, according to claim 17, wherein said external electronic device comprises means for designing cooking recipes.

30. A method, according to claim 17, wherein said external electronic device comprises means for adjusting a recipe as a function of the number of people to be served.

31. A method, according to claim 17, wherein said external electronic device comprises means for managing purchase lists of foodstuff.